

TRIBUTE TO THE DEDICATION
CEREMONY OF IBED'S NEWLY
REMODELED FACILITY

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers proudly dedicates their newly remodeled facility in Detroit, MI. Their building in Detroit is a proud symbol of their dedication to the growth and prosperity of the Greater Detroit metropolitan area and its citizens.

For the past 83 years, the IBEW has provided safe electrical installation and maintenance for those who live in southeastern Michigan. The union has a long and prosperous history of faithfully serving our workers, community, and country. During the war years, Local 58 joined the war effort to maintain industries needed to sustain our arsenal for defense. Many members joined the military and sacrificed their careers and lives to fight for their country.

Within the walls of Local 58's building, union leaders and members have joined together to protect democracy and the rights of workers. Their vision of safe working conditions, fair wages, and job protection began inside those walls. Over the years, contracts have been fought and settled by generations of dedicated union members.

The exterior of the building has been altered but on the inside the same dedication to the rights of the workers remains. I would like to congratulate Local 58 for their contributions to their profession, community, and country.

ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER ON
NATO

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from a meeting of the heads of delegations to the North Atlantic Assembly in Reykjavik, Iceland, where Icelandic Foreign Minister Halldor Asgrimsson delivered a remarkable speech on the future of the North Atlantic Alliance.

I am inserting the text of the speech into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and commend it to the attention of Members.

SPEECH BY HE HALLDOR ASGRIMSSON, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL TRADE—APRIL 5, 1997

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to welcome representatives of the North Atlantic Assembly to Iceland. We are proud to be one of the founding members of NATO, an institution of unrivalled importance to Icelandic, European and, most importantly, Trans-Atlantic security.

Through membership of NATO Iceland shares its fate with its allies. In fact, we like to think of Iceland's membership in NATO as the very embodiment of the Trans-Atlantic link.

To reinforce our security we have since 1951 had a bilateral defense agreement with the United States, pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty. The defence of Iceland's sov-

ereignty has thereby been based on a credible US military presence and robust reinforcement plans. It is my strong belief that this agreement has been to the mutual benefit of both countries and served to increase allied security as a whole.

The post-cold war era has called for some adjustments in our bilateral defence co-operation as reflected by the changed security environment in Europe and the North Atlantic. This has been achieved by a special understanding, or "Agreed Minute" signed one year ago, which sets the force levels at Keflavik to the bare minimum of what we consider credible defences for this country.

The nature of the threat our Alliance is faced with has changed, but the risks are still there. Russia's Northern fleet is still a force to reckon with, and is of growing importance to Russia's overall military capability and its status as a major power.

I do not wish to issue any gloomy predictions as regards future developments in that great and important country and most sincerely hope to see Russia develop as a prosperous democracy with a strong and lasting partnership with the west. But we have to be aware of the fact that there is still a level of uncertainty about Russia's future course.

The NATO base at Keflavik offers an excellent infrastructure and operational capability to preserve the security functions needed in this part of the world.

The crucial element here is the continuation of one of the basic principles of our Alliance, the indivisibility of security for the member states. This principle becomes all the more important now when we are taking the first steps towards accepting new members.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have today the opportunity of creating a Europe whole and free, a goal that eluded us for over forty years due to the post war division of Europe, and Cold War rivalry. The profound changes and transformation that started in 1989 continue. Fortunately these have, on the whole, been positive.

Still terrifying events have also occurred of scale and cruelty we thought belonged to Europe's past and the post-cold war era has brought new risks and challenges as well as new opportunities.

I believe there are several collective lessons that can be learned from the events since 1989. One is that peace is not to be taken for granted. Another is that despite overall progress, people in our part of the world are still capable of inflicting pain and suffering on fellow human beings. A third, and fundamental lesson, is that the North Atlantic Alliance and the Trans-Atlantic link remain the base of our collective security now that we take on new security challenges that threaten peace and stability in our region.

1997 will be a landmark year for our alliance. The current issues we commonly face are of profound importance for the emerging new European Security Architecture. These are the internal adaptation of NATO, the enlargement process, the extended outreach to our partners through PfP and the proposed Atlantic Partnership Council, and the strengthening of relations with Russia and Ukraine.

The internal adaptation process is by no means easy. It is important that throughout this transformation we do not lose sight of our primary objective of ensuring credible Allied defense, well into the next millennium. As the Alliance transforms itself, we should take care not to let national aspirations stand in the way of our mutual success.

We have seen the development of the Combined Joint Task Force concept that makes the Alliance better suited to take on new

missions like crisis management and conflict prevention. Also, the decision to build and reinforce a European Security and Defense Identity within the Alliance, and not separate from it, is a key factor in the current adaptation. One of the objectives of the current adaptation should be to have European allies properly engaged in the defense structure.

At the same time the Trans-Atlantic link and a strongly visible and credible American presence in Europe and the command structure needs to be maintained. Nothing should be done to undermine that. If we do that, we threaten the very foundation of our Alliance and our common security.

Another key task facing the Alliance is the preparation for new members. At the Summit in July, the decision on which countries to invite to the first post-cold war enlargement of NATO will be made. This will be the fourth time the alliance will enlarge since its foundation.

Since the start of the enlargement process, we have seen decisive action from many of our partners, who have expressed their interest in membership, to fulfill membership criteria. This in itself has had a very positive influence on European security. Many of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have already concluded, or are about to conclude agreements with their neighbors settling previously unresolved disputes. In this way, NATO enlargement is already proving to be of benefit to European security as a whole.

Enlargement is important to erase the artificial division of Europe and to recognize, through concrete action, that free independent countries have the right to choose their own security arrangements. This right is clearly stated in the OSCE documents and has been confirmed as recently as at the OSCE Lisbon Summit last December. It would be totally unacceptable if certain countries were to be defined as not being eligible for NATO membership. In this context I would like to draw your attention to the case of the Baltic States and ask that their needs and aspirations receive your goodwill and attention.

After the end of the Cold War NATO has engaged in constructive dialogue and co-operation with its former adversaries. In 1991 this took on concrete form with the establishment of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council. In 1994 this co-operation and dialogue was brought to a new level with the initiation of the Partnership for Peace program.

PfP has proved to be one of the most effective security co-operation programs ever, and has brought together all the NATO allies and virtually every European country, regardless of past or present affiliations. The experiences gained through PfP have been vital to the success of the peace operation in Bosnia Herzegovina.

We should enhance PfP and further strengthen co-operation with our partners with the establishment of an Atlantic Partnership Council. This will be especially important in light of the Alliance's enlargement, since unfortunately, the Alliance will not be able to accommodate all countries aspiring for membership in the first round of post-Cold War enlargement.

Again, in this context we must make it crystal clear that the Alliance remains open, and that this first post Cold War enlargement will not be the last. Furthermore, we should ensure that countries that still see membership of NATO as their ultimate goal will be able to co-operate and adapt to the Alliance's mode of operation as far as possible through the enhanced PfP and APC.

As regards those countries that do not seek membership, the APC and enhanced PfP will